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PROGRAMS FOR EDUCABLE RETARDED PUPILS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPT. OF EDUCATION, TRENTON

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THE NEW JERSEY PROGRAM FOR EDUCABLE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS RECOMMENDS INTEGRATION OF THESE STUDENTS INTO THE REGULAR DRIVER EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. CLASSIFICATION OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN FOR PLACEMENT PURPOSES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINER. EDUCABLE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS MAY BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL UPON CERTIFICATION BY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THAT THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM HAS BEEN COMPLETED. FACILITIES OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ARE A NECESSARY PART OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM. CHARACTERISTICS, OBJECTIVES, AND SUGGESTED STUDENT PLACEMENTS IN WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS ARE LISTED. FEDERAL FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS DEALING WITH VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION. THIS ARTICLE IS THE EXCHANGE, VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2, MARCH 1966. (JW)

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ERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Exchange

DIVISION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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PROGRAMS FOR EDUCABLE RETARDED PUPILS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Since publication of *The Exchange* in February, 1957, "The Educable Child in Our Secondary Schools" and the issue of February, 1959, "The Educable Child in High School", much interest has been evidenced in expansion of programs at the secondary level.

As written in Chapter 178, Laws of 1954, educable mentally-retarded children are those who may be expected to succeed with a minimum of supervision in homes and schools and community life, and are characterized particularly by reasonable expectation that at maturity they will be capable of vocational and social independence in competitive environment.

The Secondary School Program

When pupils are classified as educable retarded, we would usually expect that the educational program provided for them will prepare them for a work experience that would result in financial independence, and provide such social experiences and knowledge that will prepare for social independence. These experiences are best provided in a high school program in which the educable pupil is integrated with the offerings of the school whenever feasible and practical. The integrated program very often provides for assignment to heterogeneously constituted homerooms, and allows for individual scheduling in academic subject areas where there is interest, ability and reasonable prognosis for success. In these programs the properly certified special education teacher assumes responsibility for a "core" type program and for scheduling pupils in all other areas of educational offerings.

Opportunities should be available for participation in extracurricular activities including athletics and in shops, driver education, music, art, physical education, agriculture, home economics, typing, family living and assembly programs. Counseling and subsequent placement in any of these areas of learning will give these pupils not only a feeling of belonging but also experiences that will add much to future adjustment.

A Survey of Secondary Schools with Programs for Mentally Retarded Children, January, 1960, indicated a total of 86 classes were approved for reimbursement purposes in 14 counties in New Jersey. A more recent survey (1965) shows a total of 237 classes in 21 counties. All counties in the state now have programs at the secondary level. The percentage increase in the three year period is approximately 90 per cent. (The above figures do not include the special schools for high school age educable retardates in the cities of Newark and Camden.)

In answer to the question frequently asked by school administrators, the State Department of Education issued a statement of policy with regard to high school-age retarded pupils. It reads: "The elementary school, after consultation with the County Supervisor of Child Study, may certify that a mentally retarded pupil has completed the elementary special education program and that the child then becomes the responsibility of the secondary school."

The mentally retarded pupil may be socially, physically and educationally immature to the extent that the elementary school can serve his needs for a longer time than the usual number of school years. On the other hand, his educational and social needs may indicate placement in a secondary program at the same or near the same chronological age as his so-called normal schoolmates. Levels of academic achievement or psychological test results do not alone constitute the basic criteria for promotion. Transition from the elementary school to the high school is determined by a multiple of factors including years in school, social development, chronological age, need for the social, vocational and varied instructional opportunities of the secondary school, and achievement in keeping with one's abilities and needs.

Some school districts have established a policy stating that chronological age of 14½ to 15 years serves as a criterion for transfer of educable retarded pupils to the high school program.

Athletics

Educable class pupils should be well integrated into the program of physical education. This is an area where they frequently can compete with others on an equal basis.

At a business meeting of the N.J.S.I.A.A., the following legislation pertaining to the educable retarded became effective, December, 1957.

THE EXCHANGE

Published by the New Jersey State Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey, as a report of activities in Special Education and related services.

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Assistant in Special Education Services
DAVID BARNHART
Assistant in Special Education Services

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"All educable class students, as defined by the New Jersey State Department of Education, shall comply with the athletic eligibility rules and regulations of the N.J.S.I.A.A. with the exception of Section 3A and Section 3B of article V, and in addition the student must have evidence of the following:

(1) Parents, or guardians, must give consent for such competitive experience.

(2) The regular special classroom teacher must certify that the youth is functioning in school commensurate with his ability.

(3) The school psychologist (if available to the school district) certifies that the youth is psychologically capable for competitive activity, and no detrimental effects should result by reason of mental retardation.

(4) The medical inspector of the school district should certify that the youth has physical ability to compete equal to that expected of other participants.

(5) The school principal, or administrator, shall make recommendation for participation."

Driver Education

Many of the educable retarded will become drivers of automobiles for personal or business reasons. Driver education should be a part of the high school program for those who are adjudged capable of mastering the necessary skills for operating a vehicle in an efficient, safe manner. Special consideration is given to those pupils, who because of inability to respond to written examinations for the driver's license might not be licensed, if the examiner is fully aware of the problem at time of examination. The special class teacher assists the driver education instructor in interpreting requirements for securing a license.

Graduation – Diploma

When the educable retarded pupil has completed the prescribed course in special education, he is eligible for graduation. In many secondary schools he participates in graduation exercises, is eligible for purchasing a class ring, and attends school social affairs. As do other graduates, he wears a cap and gown and receives a diploma or certificate indicating that he has completed the curriculum in Special Education or a certificate of accomplishment.[1] Educators generally accept the philosophy that the highest educational standards imply challenging each child according to his individual capacity.

Problems of Classification

The local board of education is always responsible for the classification of retarded children. Classification of children remains the responsibility of the psychological examiner. Placement of children in classes for the mentally handicapped should involve consultation of the professional personnel including the team where available, the teacher, the principal and the County Supervisor of Child Study in those areas where professional services are not available. The problem is relatively simple where both elementary and secondary schools are conducted by the local board. Problems requiring team consultation frequently arise where there are sending-receiving relationships, or in cases of regional boards of education. The services of the County Supervisor of Child Study who serves under the authority of the County Superintendent of Schools are especially important in the disposition of the following problems:

(1) *The receiving high school considers a child as retarded, yet the sending board has not classified the child.* This often involves making arrangements for legally required psychological services on a cooperative basis, as the sending board has the initial responsibility to classify retarded children.

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[1] *Examples of diplomas will be found in "The Exchange", Office of Special Education, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, New Jersey Department of Education, February, 1959.*

(2) *The sending board has provided special education for children classified as retarded, but the receiving board may not yet have provided the legally required education.* This often requires a careful analysis of facilities and programs of both the sending and the receiving board so the child can be given educational opportunity for the days or even weeks pending the receiving board's taking the steps necessary to comply with the law.

(3) *The regional board of education receives children from several school districts which exhibit some variation in classification and placement patterns.* The regional board now becomes the board which is responsible for classification and placement. A child who has been classified as retarded continues to require special education in the regional high school. When the regional board disagrees with the classification, it has the authority to arrange for a reclassification, as well as to classify children who have not been previously classified.

Work Experience Programs

Work experience programs are evolving throughout New Jersey and over the Nation. Each year of industrial progress and automation results in fewer jobs for the less skilled, for those with less ability. Because of lack of goals, there is a high rate of drop-outs in the group of those classified as mentally retarded--the less able. A large number of these early school-leavers in the area of the retarded are unprepared to take their place in employment if they have not participated in a high school work orientation-work experience program.

In a project plan[2] for educable mentally retarded stu- we find these statements:

"In Essex County the first high school class was established in East Orange in 1961 followed by a class in West Essex Regional and another in Montclair in 1962. Presently the three high schools have four classes serving eleven communities.

"All these programs had as their objectives the preparation of pupils for gainful employment by motivating them to remain in school and providing appropriate learning and work experiences. However, it soon became evident to the school personnel that a very important part of the program was lacking, namely, school work experience as an integral part of the school program.

"The schools tried to initiate a work study program by encouraging pupils to seek after-school employment, by providing some work experiences within the school setting and by cooperating with the New Jersey Rehabilitation Commission counselor who was assigned to these schools. Although all these attempts met with some degree of success, it became increasingly apparent that one of the most effective and economical ways of preparing secondary educable pupils for productive work would be through a comprehensive work-study program initiated while the pupils were still in school. Work study programs that were in operation in Baltimore, Maryland; New York; and Massapequa, New York; and other places proved conclusively that such programs were successful in bridging school and work-life, and helpful in eliminating long, fruitless periods of searching for employment."

In a forward to "An Outline of Procedures for Operating an Employment Orientation Program for Mentally Retarded Students Enrolled in Special Education Classes in Secondary Schools in New Jersey" (November, 1962), Commissioner Frederick M. Raubiner stated:

"This bulletin was prepared in order to enable laymen and educators to understand the general nature of the employment orientation program for pupils in special education classes in secondary schools and to emphasize the point that such school-work programs must be carefully organized, properly supervised and planned so that the trainee's educational objective and his personal safety are constantly safeguarded. The procedures described in this bulletin were developed largely through an evaluation of the program of the East Windsor Board of Education, Hightstown, New Jersey.

"The Employment Orientation Program is designed specifically for retarded students and differs greatly from other cooperative education programs both in objectives and operational procedures."

In-School Work Experience

A bulletin prepared by the Division of Vocational Education in cooperation with the Division of Curriculum and Instruction and approved by the State Board of Education, November 3, 1965 describes the general nature of the employment orientation program for retarded pupils in public schools in New Jersey.

It is stated in this bulletin that "The limitations of a school setting, make it necessary to use the facilities of business and industry as a final testing ground for that which is learned in school. By providing information about the adjustment of individual pupil trainees in realistic job situations, business and industry can assist the school in enabling the degree of readiness of each pupil for actual employment and the areas of employment orientation which require further emphasis."

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[2] *A Comprehensive Work Study Project for Educable Mentally Retarded Students Through a Cooperative Program Between the New Jersey Rehabilitation Commission and Educational Programs in the School District of East Orange, Montclair and West Essex Regional in Essex County, New Jersey.*

Some high schools provide work experiences within the high school or in other school buildings in the district. These work experiences are usually without wages or other compensation. These experiences are in cafeteria and custodial services, stockrooms, upkeep of grounds, assisting with lunch periods for handicapped children and assisting in audio-visual aid programs and mimeographing materials.

Work experience programs now operating in schools are either under the direct supervision of the special classroom teacher or coordinator of the program, and are incorporated as a part of the course of study adopted by the Board of Education. These programs differ from other vocational or cooperative education programs in that they are supervised, on-the-job orientation to employment programs. This becomes a terminal school experience and the pupil completes his supervised training when he becomes employable on a full-time basis.

For these retarded pupils, the work experience program offers opportunities to meet needs that usually cannot be met within the confines of the school. Association with others on the job, employer-employee relationships, reactions to production pressures, and responses to direction and criticism are of equal importance to skill training. These considerations become a part of the classroom discussions in well planned work orientation programs.

The work experience program for the educable retarded should be planned cooperatively with the school administration and with the understanding and cooperation of the entire school faculty. An advisory committee, formed to plan the initial program, will give impetus to developing an effective work experience for these pupils. Such a committee could include representation from labor, local major business and industrial establishments, the rehabilitation commission, the New Jersey Employment Service, and local service clubs. This committee is purely advisory and contributes to encouraging local acceptance of the program, developing school-employer agreements, and planning job placement opportunities.

The "Outline of Procedures for Operating an Employment Orientation Program for Mentally Retarded Students Enrolled in Special Education Classes in Secondary Schools in New Jersey"[3] lists the following characteristics of Employment Orientation Programs:

1. Education is the primary goal.
2. School and industry share training responsibilities.
3. Cooperating employers are carefully selected.
4. Students are carefully selected.
5. Advisory committees are essential.
6. Students are not permitted to work in hazardous occupations.
7. Students must be paid.
8. The teacher coordinator is the key to a successful program.
9. The length of the course is determined locally.
10. Several school-work scheduling patterns are possible:
    a. One week in school, one week at work.
    b. Full day in school, full day at work.
    c. Half day in school, half day at work.
11. Local, state and federal labor laws must be observed.

Educable retarded pupils participating in a work experience program must comply with regulations of the New Jersey Department of Labor with regard to type of employment and hours of work. Wages must meet minimum standards. The handicapped may work at a reduced rate but a special form must be secured under these circumstances from the Wage and Hour Bureau, Department of Labor and Industry, Trenton, New Jersey.

In 34:2-21.17 under the title "PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT FOR MINORS UNDER 16 AND UNDER 18, INAPPLICABLE TO WORK IN SCHOOLS," we find this statement:

"Nothing in this section shall be deemed to apply to the work done by pupils in public or private schools of New Jersey under the supervision and instruction of officers or teachers of such organizations.

Any permits should be cleared through the federal Wage and Hour Bureau if interstate or federal contracts are involved."

It is suggested that employment on construction jobs be avoided.

Suggested placements for work experience will vary according to the opportunities available in the area of the location of the school. Suggested placements that have proven effective include:

1. Food handling and restaurant work, dishwasher, stock boy, vegetable man, assistant cook, bus boy, counter service, baker's helper and sandwich, dessert and salad-maker.
2. Garment trades.

   Delivery boy, floor boy, presser and certain sewing operations.
3. Motor Vehicle operation and maintenance.

   Garage porter, handyman, parking lot attendant, gasoline station attendant, auto body repair.

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[3] *Copies may be secured from the Office of Special Education Services, New Jersey State Department of Education, 225 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey.*

4. Building Maintenance and Operation.

   Handyman, janitorial assistant, doorman.

5. Personal Service.

   Shoe shiner, shoe repairer, messenger, package wrapper, hospital attendant, nurses aide, domestic service.

6. Laundering, Cleaning, Dyeing.

   Puller, feeder, folder, starcher, sleever, shirt worker, collar and cuff presser, shirt packer, laundromat attendant, sorter, tagger, spotter.

7. Agriculture.

   Greenhouse attendant, florist's helper, farm hand, mowing and trimming lawns, assistant gardener, handyman.

8. General factory work.

   Stock work, light machine operation, bench work, sorting, packing, assembly worker.

9. General Clerical.

   Collating, stapling, packaging, banding, binding.

10. Miscellaneous.

    Craft worker, lens grinding, furniture refinishing, nurse's aide, summer camp jobs.

A memorandum for employers from the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, United States Government Printing Office, 1963, includes these statements;

"Strong points that most mentally retarded men and women show on the job:

They want to make good. They will work particularly hard to make good.

They want to stay put on the job. They're not anxious to job-hop. They're happy to learn the job and remain with it.

Their attendance record usually is better than average.

They are willing workers, and will stay at routine tasks.

"A Connecticut psychologist studied the records of employed retardates after they had been on the job 12 years. Results:

Employers ranked the retarded just as high as the non-retarded on promptness, regularity, friendly relations with fellow workers and steadfastness on the job. Median weekly earnings compared favorably with the non-retarded. Predicted the psychologist: because of their favorable work records, most will continue in their present jobs until they retire."

Planning a Work Experience Program

Successful programs in New Jersey public secondary schools follow a general pattern of operation. The board of education formally approves the special education program.

There is an orientation program for pupils coming from self-contained elementary school classrooms into an integrated program of the high school.

The curriculum content of the high school program is reviewed and revised to meet the needs of the retarded in light of employment and participation as a citizen of the community. It is directed toward total life adjustment.

The total faculty of the school is knowledgeable concerning the overall program for special class pupils.

Daily programs are individualized with pupils scheduled in areas where the offerings are meaningful and where there is an awareness of practical application.

These pupils are integrated with other pupils wherever and whenever feasible.

Vocational diagnosis and evaluation for employment are a part of the counselling of each pupil.

Job experience is provided. The general pattern is first:

a. Orientation to work experience.

b. Work experience within confines of the school.

c. Work experience in the community.

Parents of these pupils are made aware of the school's efforts to meet the needs of these pupils and their support is encouraged.

One member of the school staff is specifically designated to coordinate the entire program.

Community resources and agencies are utilized.

Objectives of Work Experience Programs

1. The specific objectives are:

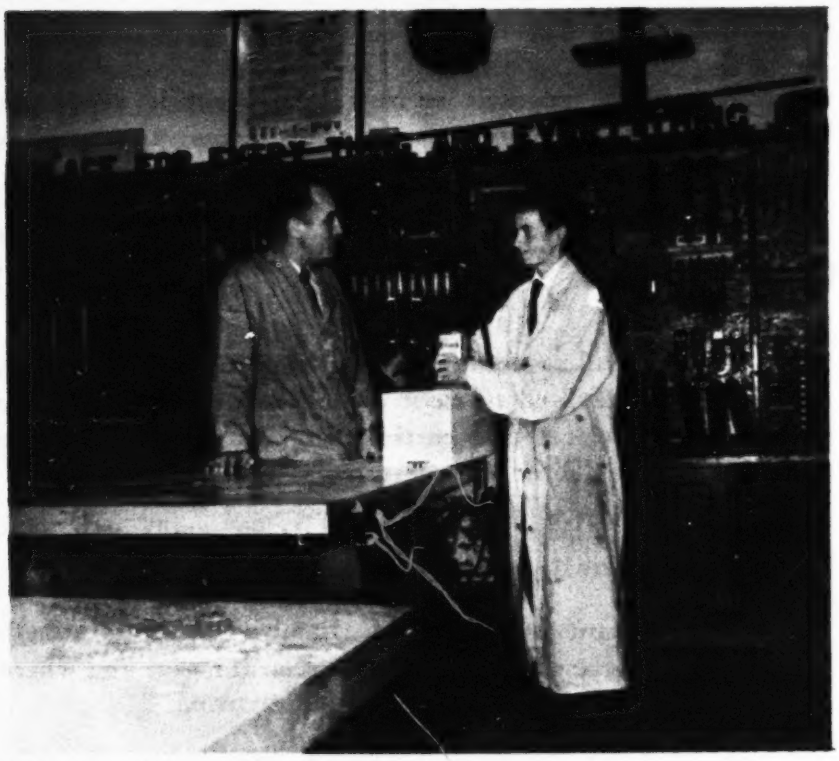
   a. Evaluating, studying and developing vocational potential.

   b. Exploring individual adjustment and learning problems in relation to vocations through exposure to a sample of suitable work experiences.

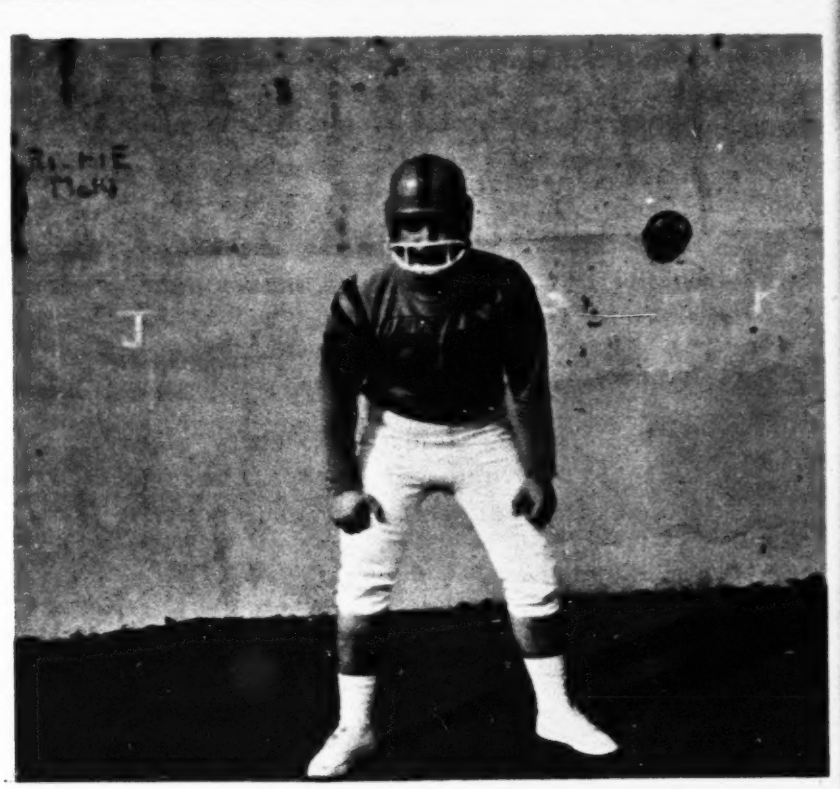
   c. Developing dependable work habits.

   d. Observing personality traits in a "work world" atmosphere in order to nurture socially acceptable behavior in job training and employment.

   e. Provision for feedback of project experiences to school personnel for possible modification of curriculum.



Pupil being taught to operate sanding machine
Union Hill High School



Varsity Football player who received letter and sweater
Union Hill High School

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f. Extending the program so that the young adult can proceed to on-the-job training, part-time employment, or a full-time job within the framework of the school setting and vocational rehabilitation.

g. Providing at the secondary level, a kind of prevocational adjustment training laboratory in which the special education staff can pool their efforts.

Vocational Rehabilitation Research and Demonstration Grant Program

The Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1954 (Public Law 565) states: "The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare shall make grants to States and public and other non-profit organizations and agencies for paying part of the cost of projects for research, demonstations, and special projects which hold promise of making a substantial contribution in the solution of vocational rehabilitation problems common to all or several of the states."

Some of the major purposes of the grants are:

1. Stimulate a substantial expansion of vocational rehabilitation programs.
2. Develop new techniques for evaluating, treating, training and placing disabled persons.
3. Increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation methods.
4. Expand the application of knowledge and experience on programs.
5. Develop new job opportunities for demonstrating the ability of handicapped persons to produce in competitive industry on jobs previously closed to them.

In the area of mental retardation priority has been given the following projects:

1. Occupational training centers.
2. Coordinated programs of vocational rehabilitation and special education services.
3. A work-experience program during the last year in school.

Several public high schools have received grants in conjunction with the New Jersey Rehabilitation Commission. Two grants have been awarded in New Jersey – one to the school districts of Montclair, East Orange and West Essex Regional in September, 1964, and the other to Delsea Regional High School in Gloucester County, January, 1965.